

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3461

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 0892

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJ: SOUTH AFRICAN CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR (CONFED) THREATENS
RENEWED DEMANDS FOR WAGE INCREASES UNLESS PRICE INCREASES
BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL

REF: JOHANNESBURG 0618

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF 200,000 MEMBER GENERALLY PRO-GOVERNMENT
CONFEN ISSUED ANGRY STATEMENT FOLLOWING MEETING AUGUST 27 WHICH
STOPPED JUST SHORT OF CONSTITUTING EXPLICIT VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE
IN SAG'S ECONOMIC POLICIES. STATEMENT, TEXT OF WHICH FOLLOWS,
THREATENS NEW ROUND OF DEMANDS FOR WAGE INCREASES EARLY IN 1975
UNLESS STEPS TAKEN TO REDUCE DOUBLE DIGIT RATE OF INFLATION.

QTE THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CONFEDERATION AT ITS QUARTERLY
MEETING YESTERDAY NOTED WITH CONCERN THAT THE CONSUMER PRICE
INCREASE HAS ONCE AGAIN RISEN TO 139.2 FOR JULY AS OPPOSED TO 137.2
FOR JUNE AND HAS INCREASED BY 9.9 POINTS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE
YEAR, AND THE END IS NOT IN SIGHT.

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QTE IN THE LIGHT OF THIS THE CONFEDERATION REMAINS CONCERNED OVER

THE OBVIOUSLY HEALTHY SITUATION WHEREIN COMPANY PROFITS FIND THEMSELVES AS ONE REPEATEDLY READS IN THE BUSINESS PAGES OF THE NEWSPAPERS.

QT IT WOULD THEREFORE APPEAR THAT ONLY THE CONSUMER IS REQUIRED TO CUT HIS SUIT TO HIS CLOTH BUT THAT PROFIT MARGINS OF COMPANIES CAN EXCALATE DESPITE INFLATION.

QTE EQUALLY UPSETTING IS THE RECENT INCREASE IN THE PRICE OF BUTTER WITH THE EXCUSE THAT IT WILL ENCOURAGE INCREASED PRODUCTION.

QTE THE CONFEDERATION REJECTS THIS SUBMISSION WITH CONTEMPT AND GIVES ITS COMPLETE SUPPORT TO THE HOUSEWIVES WHO ARE BOYCOTTING BUTTER.

QTE THEN THERE IS THE QUESTION OF THE INCREASED RAILWAY TARIFFS WHICH PRESUMABLY WILL BE ANNOUNCED SHORTLY.

QTE THE CONFEDERATION DOES NOT BEGRUDGE THE RAILWAYMEN THEIR RECENT WAGE IMPROVEMENTS BUT PREDICTS THAT THE INCREASED TARIFFS WILL ONCE AGAIN SET IN TRAIN A WHOLE SERIES OF UNJUSTIFIED PRICE INCREASES IN CONSUMER GOODS.

QTE FOR EXAMPLE, IF IT COST HALF A CENT EXTRA TO TRANSPORT A TIN OF FISH, THE RETAIL PRICE WILL GO UP BY 5 CENTS, OR IF IT COST 15 CENTS TO TRANSPORT A PAIR OF SHOES THE PRICE WILL GO UP 50 CENTS-- ALWAYS WITH THE EXCUSE THAT RAIL TARIFFS HAVE BEEN INCREASED.

QTE THE CONFEDERATION IS SICK AND TIRED OF THIS CYNICAL EXPLOITATION OF THE WORKERS AND WISHES TO SERVE NOTICE THAT IF THIS SORT OF THING OCCURS AGAIN AS A RESULT OF THE TARIFF INCREASES THEN THE TRADE UNIONS WILL BE BACK EARLY IN THE NEW YRAR FOR FURTHER WAGE ADJUSTMENTS ON THE BASIS OF THE INCREASED COST OF LIVING UNQTE.

2. COMMENT: CONFED LEADERS ARE OBVIOUSLY STILL SMARTING OVER THEIR FAILURE TO OBTAIN HIGHER PERCENTAGE INCREASES FOR THEIR MEMBERS IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH SAG HELD EARLIER THIS YEAR (REFTEL).

GUTHRIE

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